

Conversation with 59 year old white male, Arkansas (Transcription)

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S: Well, I was born up here in the between the you know <gap>. I didn't live there I was born and raised there. And then I moved to Clarksville, got hitched up to an old gal, and then I went to Pine Bluff and then I just traveled all over, and worknig going to school, I didn't get the education like you know some people. I only got to sixth grade and then I had to fight to get the rest of it. I taken up machinist, and sheet metal, electronics, and mechanic work. It just seemed to be natural with all my people mechanics you know. Airplane... or whatever. I worked down in New Orleans in Shipyards. Worked two people same time - <unintelligible text> But I done just about everything, Sanding floors, and a-laying tiles and carpentry work, ..

F: How did you get time in the missile.?

S: Well, I was working, I worked about 15 years as sheet metal technician for the company in New Orleans and when I left there and moved to Mississippi, so I moved over there with them. And I was working there when the test site come in. And when they started hiring why

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I go out there and hiring any sheet metal technicians. And after I once got in there they found out what kind of a guy I was would do anything. They started giving me raises and I <gap> worked there on computers and everything else there, they had.

F: You were raised in the Ozarks?

S: Yeah, I was raised between back then my address was Swain, but it's not even there no more.

F: That's where East of here?

S: Well that's like going up toward like you're going to Jasper or Deer. It's still there but back then it was the Post Office and the Post Office left. And it was discontinued. Just like a lot of the schools up in there gone now. Here, Deer, over at Oark, or Clarksville. Just a big school.

F: What do you remember about ...that area when you were growing?

S: It's different. I guess in a way we had a lot of fun back then. When we was small. It was hard times, there ain't nothing back during the depression and we was a farmer and we farmed. We was a large family of us, and we farmed a forty acre farm like we you know, go to lotta places all around the neighborhood, and lease it. And grew food on the remainder. We'd take it back then, we'd take a corn to a mill and wheat to the mill and all that stuff would get ground up. Well now there ain't no such thing as that. There may be some

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corn now, but we raised everything we eat. Only thing we didn't have back then we didn't have many clothes. Or shoes. But we had plenty to eat, usually. We canned it all up. And but nowadays they buy it out of the store or if the depression hit like it was back in them days people'd starve to death. Today they don't even know how to plant nothing in the ground. And that's including my son. He just won't plant nothing.

F: It's not hard planting, it's just taking care of it after.

S: Yeah. That's right. But people got used to the good stuff for dinner. The good living. It ain't like it was when we was growing up. We had to work from sun-up to sun-down, and lots of time we was out there working in the moonlight. Gathering corn and stuff. But nowadays they don't understand. You tell them you tell some of these boys the kind of stuff that we went through back then, they won't believe you. It's too fantastic you know to even believe. And working out there for fifty cents a day busting rails and building fence you know and stuff like that they just look at you, you know. It was hard back then. Well when Roosevelt come out with that program God you went to work on the roads. Dynamiting them. Getting a dollar a day. After that you done pretty good. You take a dollar a day with what we had canned and you could buy clothes and shoes and stuff with it. Back then you could buy a pair of pants for a quarter. Or a shirt

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something like that. Now what is it? About thirty - thirty bucks? you know for just the pair of dress pants.

F: Uh-huh.

S: Yeah. We moved offal back there I was back fifteen or sixteen, when I moved, and they had programs for people who didn't want to go to school. I jumped at them. Because I had to stop school and go to work to make a living, for you know for the rest of the family.

F: How many were in your family?

S: Well, let's see I've got one brother older than me, 2 brother younger than me, and then we had one sister. Plus we've got half brothers and sisters. And then their kids. Now they'd come in there about <unintelligible text> about the time winter broke, starving and we'd take them in and they'd stay around there most of the winter you know. And they had, my half sister had fourteen kids. Just like stair steps.

F: Are they still living around here?

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S: No, they just spread out all over now. I don't really know them if I see them.

F: Are your brothers and..?

S: Well my own brothers they live around here, they live round Ozone. I don't know where the other one's at. And then my half brothers <gap> they live downtown somewheres. And they got <unintelligible text> he's he's over here some place down at Ozone. <unintelligible text> somewhere in that area. He's real old now. And my other brother he just died, one of my half brothers, <unintelligible text>

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<unintelligible text>, he was he was more like me he was mechanically inclined and when it come to building something, he'd just build anything, just like me.

F: Uh-huh.

S: And me and him'd get together we'd just couldn't get away from each other we'd just talk, talk, talk. And he died the other day. What's the date you come up here to interview me that I had to go? And I went to his funeral that day. It hurt me. He was the only one

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I could really talk to, of my brothers. And all of his sisters they all are dead. There's one more, <unintelligible text>. And we got <unintelligible text> he lives Tulsa I think. He's older than me. And <gap> she's my sister, she married <unintelligible text>. They live on 21. And <unintelligible text> he lives over on <gap> I think. <unintelligible text> he's down around Clarksville or in this area. I don't really know exactly where he lives. He moves around a lot.

F: Ain't you retired now?

S: Yeah, I had I worked on a lot of stuff down in Mississippi, and <ain't?> nobody else worked on. I figured I'd work on it or it wouldn't get done, it was contaminated. And I worked at it for about three weeks, after that I started going down hill. I guess I got pretty well torn up out there. ripped all these muscles out of my shoulder. Had that operated on and had to take out some of the muscles and

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I can't use it. <gap> . And the right hand it crushed. I crushed it got one bone in one side. And <gap> that hand. Just two fingers chalk. You know, but after I had to retire I couldn't work. I had a heck of a time getting my disability. Like to starved to death. And I didn't know I could do anything then like I do now. I'd write books, I got 99 books wrote, and I do these paintings. I won third prize on this one here that I did. And that little old ship up there I painted that sitting in the chair. And just something to do. But I didn't even like to even write a letter back then. You know I'd always liked to work. You know I was just content to

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work all the time. I'd work - when my boys ? small, I worked two jobs. 16 hours a day. And on the weekends I we worked at a service station. And I run it over the weekends. For a friend of mine. And that's the way I've worked all of my life. I really loved to work. I was like a dawg-gone computer or something you know I never didn't want to stop. Well I'd come home I'd work on my house, I'd mow the yard, I'd built fence you know just whatever need be done around the house.

F: That's probably a pretty big change, when you had that..

S: When I had to quit.. I liked to went crazy. And the only thing, I finally sat down there one day I was going to write a song I would write a song instead of all the pity. I set down there and started to write a song,

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and never did stop. I just kept ? writing. Come to find out I had a brain for writing too. It's just creative. I mean it's not the true, it's just something to do.

F: Do you write any on the spaceship field?

S: Yeah, oh I got a lot of ships drawed over of different kinds. Just sit down to draw. And if I had the money, with the stuff that I know, I believe I could build one. Not like they have - fuel guzzlers, like they do, the county could get up there to the moon besides go out to

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space. I mean the type to run around here with. You know not a automobile, but it'd go through the air.

F: Uh-huh.

S:

I'm pretty sure it would.

F: Is that the power system for it?

S: Well, you'd have three power systems. It all depends on how fast you want to go. Or and all that. You've got three power systems in it. One of them is just to raise it up off the ground. I mean you can go as high as you want to as low as you want to, you know. Just by flipping switches.

F: What about the visitations from outer space? How do you feel about that?

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S: Well, I saw them. I saw a space ships. People make me out a liar but I saw several.

F: In Mississippi or here?

S: No, here, right here. I believe in 21 I saw seven over

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there on the 21. One come down and turned right there turned and looked at me. When I was shining lights at it when it was coming down. I had a big old five cell flashlight and and I was shining them. You know back and forwards like that trying to get him to come down. I wanted to talk with them. Well one did, it come down and just come down and set there and turned just gradually turned. And just run off. I was standing there looking at it.

F: What did it look like?

S: It looked like - well it was made in the bottom of it like it was turned it turned just like looking at it. And that leader had a big red light. And it was flashing. And then around the bottom of it it looked like a fan blades do. But in the opposite direction. And it was fire shooting out of it. It didn't have any of that fan blade, just had the had the blades.

F: You say it was a saucer top?

S: It was round, but behind it now was the ship. This was just the bottom of it, behind it was <gap> But you see the edges in the dark. But the front of it was just like gold. A gold color. Sort of like magic. And a fire come out at night. I don't know where it come from. I was out there and looking at it. But nobody'd believe it. You know.

F: No, it's hard to.

S: ? tell somebody something like that and I know no such

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thing come from outer space. And I done watching seven of them come in down. Like a ball of fire. But you take a star if its coming down, the farther it gets to earth the smaller it gets. Til it burns up. These things when you see them the closer - they get the bigger they get. It wouldn't be something burning up it was a ship. When it'd get down close to the ground it looked like it just disappeared. Just vanished. So but this one time it didn't., come around and <gap>.

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F: Did you stay there for a while?

S: Yeah, it just turned real slow.

F: Did you feel like heat or anything?

S: No, it was off a ways. But it just gradually went off. Just like <gap> beauty.

F: Make any noise?

S: Didn't make a bit of noise. No noise at all. Me, I'm maybe some kind of nut, but if they'd come down, It'd tickle me to death to just talk to them. I wouldn't care what they'd look like. But I know they ain't going to look like me. But I wouldn't be a-scared, I'm not a-scared of nothing. I'd walk right out there and welcome them in my house. And talk with them. I mean I'm not scared of something like that. Never was scared. Even back when I was a kid, I'd walk when it was dark at night for miles and hear stuff all in the woods, didn't bother me. I was wondering what it was, bother me. But it never did scare me. And one time that I really